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THE  
VOICE  
OF THE  
WORKER

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic ...' James Connolly

## SOULTREK-FAREWELL TO HELL

'WE HAVE THE QUESTIONS. We do not dare to say that we have the answers. But we dare search. And with God's help and the co-operation of all the men we may be able to shed a little light on what it will take to build the new Limerick that we all desire, a city where mutual trust will take the place of lock and key, a city where every human being will have his worth because for us every human being is Christ. Fr. Kavanagh is very anxious that younger men in the 18-35 age group should consider coming to this retreat as the development of this region depends so much on them. In planning it the needs of the younger men of the area have been kept very much in mind.'

These words, issued by the Redemptorist Confraternity when launching 'Soultek', its 'new look' retreat, lay bare the philosophy behind its attempt to come to terms with the problems that beset it. The new approach to the retreat involved question and answer sessions on a variety of social questions between priests and a variety of people including broadcasters, politicians, businessmen and trade union officials.

The retreat was remarkable for its complete emphasis on the here-and-now world rather than the here-after. It marks a milestone in the history of Confraternity

retreats as the first time that the subject of hell was dropped from the curriculum. In the past the themes of death and hell were repeated ceaselessly during sermons. Redemptorist preachers pulled out every



"DO WE PROMISE TO RENOUNCE OUR PAST AND ALL OUR WORKS AND POMPS"

rhetorical device to describe the eternal torments of hell, and in the process skillfully exploited gory images and harrowing details to strike fear into their hearers.

God was evoked as a grim spectre of death and punishment. The fires of hell were kept well stoked, and lost souls were destined to suffer for ever and ever. Sean O'Casey describes this type of blood-and-thunder show: 'You know as little about truth as anybody else, and you care as little about the Church as the least of those that profess her faith; your religion is simply the state of being afraid that God will torture your soul in the next world as you are afraid that the Black and Tans will torture your body in this.'

Now, however, all is changed. The Redemptorists openly admit that 'we do not dare to say that we have the answers.' Up to the early 'sixties the Confraternity retained its influence over the Limerick working class. The city at this time was relatively small and compact, and the Weekly Confraternity meeting marked a central place in most workers' lives. The coming of industry to Shannon and the region and the dispersal of workers to

continued overleaf

## bedford row bonanza

MANY PEOPLE were intrigued to read a report headed, 'Hospital Plight Is Serious', in the 'Limerick Leader' of September 4. The article, based on a discussion at a Mid-Western Health Board meeting, stated: 'It is possible that financial aid will be given to Bedford Row Hospital, in Limerick, which is stated to have been losing money. It is understood that losses running into some thousands of pounds have been incurred in recent times, due mainly to salary increases. The Mid-Western Health Board, which administers health services in the region, has decided to help the hospital ... The case for aid was put before the Board meeting, last weekend, by Dr. S. Crowe. He said that Bedford Row Hospital started in 1812 and received a grant from the Hospitals' Sweep up to 1950 ... The Bedford Row Hospital kept its head above water until 1970, but due to increases in the costs of salaries for staff losses were incurred.'

Dr. Crowe picked his words carefully and did not disclose the names of the Limerick doctors who acquired the hospital after the Hospitals' Sweep grant had been cut off. This omission did not deter Senator Ted

Russell, who moved in smartly to support Dr. Crowe's cause and proposed to the Board meeting that 'they pay a capitation grant or a deficit, and seek the Minister's permission to do so.' He said that 'very sympathetic consideration should be given to the call for aid, as they all knew of the work done by that hospital. They already had a precedent for doing this, and they should deal with the matter directly without dealing with the Department of Health.' Cllr. Jack Bourke had no hesitation in closing class lines to second Russell.

When the Bedford Row Hospital was taken over by the Limerick doctors to be run as a private maternity home, the deal was acclaimed in local medical circles as a smart business coup, and not as a public-spirited, philanthropic gesture. While the hospital continued to make an annual profit, its affairs were quietly conducted, and the public was never taken into the confidence of the men concerned concerning the identity of the owners or the profits made. Dr. Crowe adroitly skipped over this period by his 'poor-mouth' claim that the hospital only 'kept its

head above water until 1970.'

But now the changed times have brought increased running expenses, and the cosy set-up is disturbed. The supply of maternity nurses has also begun to dry up as these nurses seek incremental, pensionable and permanent jobs in health authority hospitals. Now we read that a public subsidy is being sought to keep the hospital going and to keep the owner-doctors happy, with their profits intact.

Without even a request for an enquiry or the production of a balance sheet the elected members and officials of the Mid-Western Health Board have unanimously recommended the payment of public money as a private hospital subsidy. If this move succeeds, the owner-doctors will continue to have a monopoly of the beds for their patients; and they will continue to collect their carefully-regulated fees, with the health board obligingly standing by with its subsidy to guarantee their profits.

The owner-doctors easily carried the day at the health board meeting, and it remains to be seen if their strong lobby will be powerful enough to secure the backing of the Department of Health. The case for the subsidy has, however, yet to be made to the people of Limerick. Over to you doctors, Moloney, Crowe, Holmes.

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## SOULTREK: FAREWELL TO HELL

continued from front page

outlying Corporation housing estates changed this traditional pattern of working and living. The Confraternity seeing this loss and its increasing helplessness in combating the drift from membership had to change if it was to survive.

The 'new look' retreat is a desperate effort by the Confraternity to create new patterns of religious practice, designed to win back its lost influence over Limerick workers. The concern with 'social problems' is an attempt to become relevant to the new industrial conditions. The deliberate playing-down of hell and the change in emphasis from the here-after to the here-and-now can be seen as the Confraternity's strategy in accommodating itself to the new technological and rational world developing around it.

Perhaps the most telling remark of the three weeks' 'Soultek' was made by Fr. Richard Tobin, when he asked: 'If I said to you that this is the Protestant idea of faith, what would you say?'

'God it has been a good day, a day I have enjoyed. I have done a lot of work, some of it I made a mess of. Give me a hand to make a better success tomorrow ... and give me direction and remind me to do the right thing. Help me because I need your help.' (Supermarket tycoon, Feargal Quinn, 'Soultek', 14/9/'72).

## RED HAND

End is near  
The final outrage  
Of a hate.

Spurred to action  
The 'Biddie' brigade  
That shawl fought.

Achieving so more  
Than the corrupt  
Guilty politicians.

That buck passed  
To piano Ted  
On Cloud Seven.

Death brought back  
A wandering Willie  
And banished Bryan.

Pray continue Provo  
To collect flesh  
In plastic bags.

While politicians condemn  
With suitable phrases  
Bishops shed 'tears'

Comment from Dublin  
Inside Sinn Fein HQ  
Away from bombs.

Red-faced patriots  
An Ulster symbol:  
Red blood hand.

# CARRY ON DOCTOR

A VAST AMOUNT of hidden hardship takes place daily in our society. Much of this suffering is allowed to occur in matters of health, social welfare and education, where parents and children are the chief victims. A recent Limerick example of how a part of the health services operates serves to underline the attitude which dominates the system.

New-born babies normally receive BCG vaccination at the Regional Maternity Hospital, or at the Bedford Row Hospital, but this service was not provided during the months of July and August. Mothers inquiring about the absence were told that the doctor who performed the vaccinations was ill. No effort to secure a replacement

was made, but instead the women were asked to present their babies at St. Camillus hospital on the second Tuesday of the month. However, in August it was learned that the hospital doctor in charge of vaccinations was on holiday and that there would be no vaccinations until September and no effort to provide another doctor was made.

On Tuesday, September 12, a three-months backlog of vaccinations had built up when hundreds of mothers with their babies queued from the St Camillus hospital gate to the door of the vaccination centre. With only one doctor at work the queue moved at a snail's pace. Good-humoured order was preserved until a rumour spread that only babies of under six weeks were being vaccinated. The women at the back of the queue tried to move up to seek confirmation of the position from someone in authority and those at the front crowded together to prevent queue jumping. The confusion arose from a notice pinned to a door stating that babies over six weeks old should be brought back the following Tuesday.

At this stage, some women accurately anticipating a further long wait called it a day and departed. A few lucky ones sat it out in cars. The rest of the women wearily stood their ground, shifting their infants from arm to arm, or from shoulder to shoulder, and tried as best they could to avoid being crushed in the surges forward every time the door of the inner sanctum opened. As the hours dragged on, the insistent cries of hungry babies grew in volume. Many mothers were forced to bring other small children with them, and the wails of these toddlers helped to swell the chorus of misery.

As they waited, the women, some of them less than two weeks after childbirth, reflected on the consideration shown to them by the health authorities. No effort has since been made to explain the lack of simple planning by the Mid-Western Health Board in not appointing a replacement doctor. Having failed to make this provision, common sense should have dictated that several doctors would be needed on the afternoon of September 12 to clear the three-months back-log of children waiting to be vaccinated.

It turned out that babies who had passed the age of six weeks, were not given the BCG vaccine but were tested, and their mothers were told to bring them back for the doctor to judge the reaction. Apart from the saving in the mothers' time and trouble, how much more simple the whole operation would have been if the babies were vaccinated in their first six weeks. One wonders how many babies will not now be vaccinated as a result of this mis-management, especially the ones who need it most, the children of over-worked, under-nourished mothers.

And, to provide a suitable background to the dismal scene, the rains came. Looking out the window, the mothers watched the rain falling on the unprotected prams. Weary, perspiring and aching all over, they were past caring.

Even in the present class-ridden health system, it does not make sense to spend money on the eradication of TB and to allow a hit-or-miss vaccination scheme. It would however, be interesting to know how many doctors, Mid-Western Health Board officials or Professional people have ever stood in a queue for four hours for a basic health service.

## come and join us

RISE, for the day is passing, and you lie dreaming on; the others have buckled their armour, and forth to the fight have gone.



## HONEST DAY'S WORK?

Stephen McGonagle, President of the ICTU:

'The Irish economy, the Irish workers, face a most critical five to eight or ten years ... On the one hand, you will have to do an honest day's work ...'

Fr. Wadding: 'You sound to me like an employer.' ('Soultek', 19/9/'72).

## ONE OF THE BOYS

by P. J. RYAN

He was a Tan on tour of Ireland,  
'Twas he hanged Mother Machree,  
He shot the only son in Dublin,  
And drowned three women in the River Lee.

With the foggy dew he was out in the morning,  
And cleared the air with a Vickers gun,  
In all this time not a Gaelic-Leaguer,  
Nor Graball man came near his gun.

Under the bed or between the blankets,  
Safe 'neath the Union Jack they cling,  
When the Tan came along they knew the words,  
Of that grand old song 'God Save The King!'

He burnt down Cork, shot up Balbriggan,  
He murdered a widow and Only Son,  
Many a farmstead gave to the flames,  
And laughed aloud at the good clean fun.

He left this Holy Land in a hurry,  
And later returned as a resident,  
He bided his time till the all-clear sounded,  
And now praise the Lord ...

john boyle

# Munich '72: politics and sport

THE MEMORY OF MUNICH fades. Thus the mythology of sport thrives. The sporting world is built upon endless variations of the same basic thrills and routines. Sport lionizes those who attain to its heights, but their position is secure only as long as they deliver the goods. Each sportsman—and increasingly this is the case—has but a few years open to him to make the grade and then such is the competition and such are the rewards to those few who succeed that in the ruthless business that is contemporary sport the failures and even the moderate successes are casually discarded upon the rubbish dump of forgotten fame.

The Olympic Games, a four-yearly event, are of their nature and infrequency so designed as to generate the maximum competitiveness in each individual athlete. This, allied to the fierce nationalism that attends to all such major sporting jamborees, produces de facto a political occasion. (E.g. the World Cup).

Undoubtedly, the 'terrorist attack' on the Israeli athletic team was the clearest illustration yet of this point. The entire

affair would simply not have occurred without the backdrop of the Games. There is no doubt that future world-embracing sporting occasions will increasingly serve as an attractive target for guerilla action. Correspondingly security will probably become a prohibitive cost factor, threatening the very existence of such events. It is arguable ideologically whether this would be a good or a bad thing.

Apart from the Israeli incident probably the most significant happening at the '72 Games was the widely expressed feelings of outrage over the behaviour of the two American negro athletes who dared to show disrespect during the playing of 'their' country's National Anthem. The bourgeois establishment, with good reasons, have a special hatred of those who refuse to acknowledge the symbols and trappings of the given social order.

The ritual of the medals-giving, the impressive silence of the huge gathering, and then the striking up of the victorious nation's anthem—this is for each country and for most of the participants, the high point and justification of their participation in the Games. To fly in the face of all this accumulated tradition is for all right-thinking people (e.g., the Irish sports reporters in attendance) 'unthinkable', and thus when the Olympic Committee slapped a life ban on the two athletes it came as no surprise. The gods of the sporting order demand obedience, and will not allow minor irrelevancies such as politics to upset their view or 'reality'.

Predictably the media reacted with its usual show of liberal outrage in the face of the 'vicious' 'brutal' etc. 'terrorist' 'attack' on the Israeli team. What form did this 'attack' take? The Black September group assuredly held the Israelis hostage—that is presently the one clear fact that can be stated regarding the entire incident. It has become almost a cliché to refer to the 'terrorist attack' but unless one is using language in a careless fashion this is scarcely true.

Piecing together the facts it appears quite clear that the orders to open fire on the guerillas and their hostages were passed on by the Zionist government in Israel. The Bavarian State Government report as much as admits this when it stated that it had no choice but to open fire once Israel refused to meet the kidnappers demands. Both the Israelis and the Palestinian guerillas knew that this was no game—the courage of the Black September members in going out to meet certain death is proof enough of this—and yet because of the ironic background of the sporting canvas, the western mass media chose to examine the incident in the light of the sporting standards of 'fair' play!

With these criteria the guerillas were adjudged not to have observed the rules! The rules here can be reduced to one quite simple tenet: Do not dare to upset the all-expenses paid journalists and athletes in their cosy idyllic village.

What is illustrated above all by the entire episode is the power of the bourgeois controlled media to pre-structure ordinary people's reaction to an event of

some political complexity by treating it apart from its historical and political context. The plight of the Palestinian refugees is at the centre of this question, and yet it has been largely ignored in all bourgeois treatments of the case.

A brief recapitulation of the recent history of the Palestinian nation is in order. Driven out of their land by the establishment of the Zionist state in 1948, the refugees fled into the neighbouring Arab states, a large number of them having of necessity to exist in miserable conditions in the hastily constructed camps.

The United Nations is alleged to be looking after the refugees. But a budget of £20 million is laughable in the light of the massive numbers involved, and indicative of the incredible poverty of the refugees in their makeshift homes is the fact that half of the total—750,000—qualify for rations, as wages (gross) per household is less than £16 per month. This poverty level has remained unchanged since the UN Relief & Works Agency was set up in 1950. (The less than working-class paper, the 'Sunday Times' of September 17, 1972, contains an account of the grim conditions of the camps and their inhabitants in the light of continuing world indifference).

Aware of the genuine grievances of the Palestinians, it is yet necessary to ask: will the Munich affair advance the Palestinians legitimate demands or not? In this context it is legitimate to point out that the last time the guerillas succeeded in focusing world attention on to their people's plight—after the hijacking incidents of 1970—the end result was that Hussein of Jordan, cynically exploiting the world backlash that was carefully created by the media—proceeded to crush the guerillas in their Jordan strongholds, a reverse from which they have not recovered. (Ironically the Black September group—a branch of El Fatah, the premier guerilla grouping—took their name from that month in 1970 when Hussein turned the weight of the Jordan army against the guerillas.) And since the Munich killings, the Israelis have launched several massive attacks into the neighbouring Arab countries, particularly Lebanon and Syria, and have extracted a more than adequate revenge for their eleven dead.

The guerillas are split among themselves, there is much disillusion among the Palestinians over the signs of a relaxation of tension between some of the Arab states—notably Egypt—and Israel, and all the time Israel is consolidating its hold upon even the territories acquired since the Six-Day War.

It would be arrogant to suggest from this distance what course the Palestinian campaign should take. But it seems clear that isolated terrorist attacks are not serving the Palestinian cause in the long run and that a more diplomatic course should be adopted. The United Nations might at the moment be a more fruitful battlefield than the frontiers of the West Bank.

This article serves as an introduction to a fuller examination of the relationship between sport and politics which will appear in a future issue.

## OLD WOMAN

Slowly an old woman walks a dark lane  
With shaking hand lifts a dust bin lid  
She needs to ease the hunger of her pain  
While a lounge bar sign lights her bid.

To free herself from hard hunger  
And cold contempt of Christian men  
So search the back lanes old woman  
Find only broken dreams in an empty bin.

You were once beautiful old woman  
Your wrinkled skin was soft and white  
Now your hair is grey and dirty old woman  
And your tears are confined to the night.

You never asked to be poor old woman  
You never thought you'd search a smelly bin  
Look to the lounge bar light of old woman  
See the rich women drink their gin.

When the new light of day dawns old woman  
When the workers will fight and win  
You won't have to walk dark lanes old woman  
And you won't have to search a smelly bin.

## quote

'IN EVERY COUNTRY Socialism is foreign, is unpatriotic, and will continue so until the working class make socialism the dominant political force ... By their aggressiveness and intolerance the possessing classes erect the principles of their capitalist supremacy into the dignity of national safeguards; according as the working class infuse into its political organisation the same aggressiveness and intolerance it will command the success it deserves and make the socialist the only good and loyal citizen'. (Workers' Republic).

IN ITS EDITION of August 26 the 'Limerick Leader' carried an 'exclusive' front-page story by Helen Buckley headed: 'Jail has taught me a Lesson, says Teenage Mother' The article stated:

'Sitting up in her bed in the Regional Maternity Hospital this week—a day after she was taken there from Limerick prison to have her baby—18-year-old Mrs. Mary Harrington said that the one thing her twelve weeks in Limerick Jail had taught her was 'a good lesson'... Throughout the interview, the young mother, who married two-and-a-half years ago, at the age of 16½, exhibited a total lack of bitterness. She didn't feel that the authorities might have jeopardized her health or that of her baby by placing her, while pregnant, in jail. The prison sojourn itself 'wasn't bad—all the officers were very nice.' She got exactly what a pregnant woman needed in prison in the way of 'good food' and care. And she didn't 'really feel' that by putting her in jail the State had behaved in an un-Christian or immoral way.'

The case of Mrs. Harrington is well known and documented. Having stolen £140 from a parish priest in Galway, she was sentenced to six months imprisonment in the sixth month of her pregnancy. Like hundreds of other prisoners, nothing more would have been thought about her were it not for the press publicity brought about by her

special condition. Reporters attempted to question the Department of Justice through the Government Information Bureau about Mrs. Harrington's case. The Bureau replied with its stock answer. 'The Department', it explained, could not comment on individual prisoners.' However, Des O'Malley has shown that he can be very vocal about prisoners when it suits him. In the Harrington affair another means of communication was exploited.

Meanwhile, pressure was building up for the release of Mrs. Harrington. The Limerick Council of Trade Unions unanimously agreed at its July meeting to petition O'Malley for the immediate release of the prisoner. Frank Prendergast, the Council's President, met the Minister and his request was promised sympathetic consideration. After this, O'Malley let it be known unofficially that when the time of the birth arrived Mrs. Harrington would be given the opportunity of having her baby in hospital. 'The Minister's sympathy' was duly demonstrated and Mrs. Harrington was transferred to the Limerick Regional Maternity Hospital the day before the baby was born.

Scarcely had Mrs. Harrington's birth pangs died away when Miss Helen Buckley presented herself at the hospital to interview, 'in the presence of a female member of the Force,' the young mother for

# what the buckley saw

(2)

## BORDER NEWS BULLETIN

by KEVIN O'CONNOR

OR

### If we only had the old *border* over here

'NEWS AT TEN' comes to you to-night with a special edition devoted to the overnight disappearance of the Border.

The mysterious loss of the Border was first reported by a group of Pig Smugglers in Monaghan. A spokesman for the group said that their livelihood was now threatened and they appealed to the perpetrators of what they termed, 'this dastardly deed', to consider the implications of their act. Chemists in border towns are all reported to be severely disquieted at the loss of export business to the South of French-style rubber balloons, while cattle dealers on both sides of the Border held emergency

meetings with their bank managers.

One unconfirmed report suggested that the theft of the Border had been effected by the SAS regiment of the British Army. 'It was they that done it,' said Kevin Street Sinn Fein. This report further stated that the Border had been shipped overnight to Britain, where it would go on show at the British Museum as a tourist attraction to illustrate 'some fighting habits of the ancient Celts ...'

A spokesman in Whitehall, however, denied that the Border was in London. Further, said the spokesman, even if the Border was in London, he wouldn't be able to confirm this as he '... er, um ... didn't quite know what the thing looked like.'

## PORNBROKER

THE 'CATHOLIC STANDARD' recently gave the whole of its front page to a report of the speech delivered by Bishop Cathal Daly ... on pornography. It seems as if the media—including the Catholic press—is intent on ensuring that the Irish people should discover pornography—and whether they like it or not!

Now the vast majority of the people of this country wouldn't know what pornography was if it came up and accosted them in the street. And wouldn't it be much more to the point if the 'Catholic Standard' could report a speech condemning: Equality of wages; Inequality of educational opportunities which trains the sons of the rich to be masters ... and trains the children of the poor to be wage slaves; The Church-dominated educational system

which educates people for a 'life hereafter' rather than it tackling the problems of this life.

But where are the bishops to make such statements? Answer: The bishops are too busy pontificating on pornography, the up-dated version of immorality which has been one of the most useful and popular red herrings used in deflecting people from considerations of the evil which really afflicts them: that is capitalism, supported by its religious apologists.



IN THE LONG RUN the freedom of a nation is measured by the freedom of its lowest class.

According to our Brussels correspondent, the problem of identification was being dealt with by an international Identi-Kit team from Interpol. One problem facing them is the matter of substance: Is the Border spiritual ...? or is it economic, or religious or political ...?

The Interpol team have, however, agreed on the question of colouring. The missing Border is likely to be coloured a combination of green and orange, they decided, with symbols of the Papal Arms and a blood-red scar running the entire 300 mile length. The team also suspect that the missing object is likely to be a few hundred years older than its official age of fifty years.

A flash just in from our Scottish correspondent claims that such an object was sighted in the early hours of the morning in the vicinity of Loch Ness. Reports that the yacht of the British Prime Minister, Mr. Heath, loaded with British tourist officials, was sighted nearby are unconfirmed.

As the news of the loss spread, the following were understood to have applied for unemployment benefit:

Mr. Gerry Fitt, Mr. Ian Paisley, Mr. Sean Mac Stiofain (now Mr. John Stephenson), Mr. William Craig, Mr. John Hume, Mr. Brian Faulkner, The entire staff of the 'Irish Press', Mr. Henry Kelly of the 'Irish Times'.

Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien has returned to the Howth branch of the Labour Party. Mr. Dathai O' Conaill has been offered the lead role in a Romantic Musical to be made in the Spring, entitled: 'Appointment in Amsterdam'. The show will be rather loosely based on the Camus novel, 'The Fall'.

Mr Heath sailed up the Liffey to cheering crowds of Dubliners, including a number from Camden Town ... and the Taoiseach and the full Cabinet are at Dun Laoghaire harbour, waiting to greet the first British tourist who has been sighted off the Isle of Man, believed heading for Ireland.

the readers of her paper. At this time, Mrs. Harrington, just out of the labour ward, was still, technically, in the custody of the State. Other reporters, also tried to secure an interview with Mrs. Harrington but were turned away. It might well be asked how Miss Buckley was allowed to actually interview this prisoner when the Department of Justice continues to refuse to answer questions from all other reporters about individual prisoners.

But then, of course, Miss Buckley is no ordinary reporter. She is the daughter of one of the owners of the 'Limerick Leader' and a friend of Minister O'Malley's wife. Nor is she any stranger to the lying-in chamber; indeed, because of her recent activity in this area she has been acquiring quite a reputation as a journalistic wet nurse. Last June saw her at Adare Manor, cap as well as pen in hand, to give her breathless readers a pen picture of the scene following the birth of the Earl of Dunraven's daughter. The piece written by Miss Buckley following her visit to the imprisoned mother and infant represents something of a change of style. The fact that there wasn't a 'beige catsuit', 'turquoise sweater' or 'marvellous trousseau' in sight in the not so 'paradisaical nursery suite' did not, apparently unduly disturb her.

While Miss Buckley did make the tongue-in-cheek observation that Mrs. Harrington's remarks 'may, however, have been tacitly dictated by the presence in the hospital private room of a young female member of the Force (out of uniform) from William Street Garda Station,' the message of the article was clear: the prisoner had learned her lesson; Crime had been punished; Justice, Correction, Righteousness and the Judgement of Minister O'Malley, had been vindicated; God was high in his Heaven; All was right with the World.

But the interview was not greeted with uncritical reception. 'Hibernia' (September 8) stated: 'In fact Mrs. Harrington was put in an impossible position. If she had failed to say the right things, she might find herself and her infant back behind prison walls. The whole interview, as a result, came through as an effective propaganda piece for the Minister for Justice in whose constituency all this took place. But the most suspicious aspect of the whole interview is that it was allowed to take place at all. It is unprecedented for a journalist to be allowed an interview with anyone in custody of the State. Even enquiries via the Government Information Bureau concerning individual prisoners invariably come to nought. One can only conclude that this exception was agreed to

by the Minister, for the effect mentioned above. The pity is that the 'Limerick Leader' allowed itself to be used in this fashion.'

Even operating on the capitalist newspaper ethic of 'profit before principle' why didn't the Leader's editor, Brendan Halligan, an experienced reporter, dump the article where it belongs—in the wastepaper basket? Halligan's difficulty in rejecting the contributions of the daughter of one of his paper's proprietors may help to explain this failure to exercise editorial judgement.

And on the subject of press ethics, why did the editors of the 'Sunday Independent' and the 'Irish Times' unashamedly run re-hashed versions of the 'Leader's' 'planted' piece?

In the circumstances, and with a three-months sentence hanging over her head, the 'Leader' left Mrs. Harrington with no option but to publicly humiliate herself. The article constituted a gross intrusion on the privacy of a woman in custody who should have been protected from being forced to take part in a cynical propaganda stunt to boost the image of the Minister for Justice. It is too much to hope that the whole affair may have taught the 'Leader' and Miss Buckley, as well as Mrs. Harrington, 'a good lesson.'

THE EXTENSION of the closed shop principle from its traditional industries in the Limerick area has led many unions and their members to study the question. While the concept of the closed shop has changed in form in modern times, it is not a new one in the history of trade unionism.

Sydney and Beatrice Webb in their book, 'Industrial Democracy', wrote: 'There is a strange delusion in the journalistic mind that this compulsory trade unionism, is a modern device, introduced by the 'new unionists' of 1889. Thus ... the establishment of monopolies, and the exclusion, 'often by gross violence and tyranny,' of 'non-unionists' from the trades they can influence' is specially marked 'among the new unionists'. But any student of trade union annals knows that the exclusion of non-unionists is, on the contrary, coeval with trade unionism itself, and that the practice is far more characteristic of its older forms than of any society formed in the present generation. The trade clubs of handicraftsmen in the eighteenth century would have scouted the idea of allowing any man to work at their trade who was not a member of the club. And at the present day it is especially in the old-fashioned and long-established unions that we find the most rigid enforcement of membership.'

In a statement to the 1946 Trade Union Congress its general council maintained that:

'The "closed shop", in the sense of an establishment in which only members of a particular union can be employed, to the exclusion of members of other unions, is alien to British trade union practice and theory. Congress has never consented to the recognition of an exclusive right to organise by one union where other unions have built up their organisation side by side.'

Yet at the same Congress Lord Dukeston (better known as Charles Dukes), in his presidential address, said:

## CLOSED SHOPS

part two

'The closed shop is nothing new in British trade union practice. It means for us the well-founded claim that workers in an industry or in an establishment covered by union agreements should be in their appropriate unions ... It exists today in the industries where unionisation is so strong that management are constrained to recognize that the holding of a union card is a necessary condition of employment.'

On the dangers of undemocratic tendencies in unions operating a closed shop Russell W. Davenport in his foreword to 'The Dynamics of Industrial Democracy' wrote:

'... the whole question of the union shop bears far more heavily on the workers than on management. It raises the fundamental problem of the union leader. If the closed shop is necessary for the union leader, that is quite another. Unhappily, the union shop has been obtained by the leaders for the leaders on all too many occasions. Leaders who do not deserve to be leaders find this monopolistic device invaluable in maintaining their power, collecting their dues, and in a general way assuring themselves of maximum safety with a minimum of work.'

In the local context, the principle of the closed shop which has spilled over into the Limerick Council of Trade Unions has now taken on a new development. As well, as the dispute between the National Electrical Engineering Trade Union and the Amalgamated

Engineering Union concerning the Ferenka and other closed shops, the Irish National Union of Woodworkers has charged that their craft members in the employment of Fiberman are being forced against their will to join the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, which has negotiated a closed shop agreement at this plant.

The extension of the closed shop agreement has led to bitterness and divisiveness among unions and workers in the Limerick area. The decision of the Limerick Council of Trade Unions to hold a full discussion on the question at its October meeting, in order to formulate a policy on the matter, is to be welcomed. When this decision is being taken, it is to be hoped that the interests of the working class as a class will triumph over narrow, sectional interests.

(To be continued)



## NAME THE GAME

THE INDEPENDENT group of newspapers made £3 million profit last year. This is the newspaper group controlled by the Murphy family—who head at the turn of the century, William Martin, was responsible for the lock-out against the starving Dublin workers.

All the three Irish 'national' newspapers were glad of the Irish interest in the Olympics—to boost much-needed circulation. The Irish team's score-sheet may be blank but the 'Independent's' financial score-sheet broke all records. Profit, not sport, continues to be the name of the 'Independent's' game.

THE MILITARY, through its Press Censors Office, issued and pasted up in the streets the following typewritten notice: 'If owing to the wanton action of ill-disposed persons, the inhabitants suffer through lack of the necessities of life, the Government are in no way responsible and cannot do anything to ameliorate the consequences of such wanton action.' To this the strike committee replied:

'Fellow Citizens, as it has come to our notice that the Military Authorities are endeavouring to spread the falsehood that it is we rather than they, who are trying to starve you, we hereby disclaim any such intentions, as we have already made every arrangement whereby foodstuffs will be distributed to our fellow citizens. Our fight is not against our own people but against the inhuman and tyrannical imposition of martial law by the British Government which is solely responsible. As peaceful workers, we only desire that we should be left alone to exercise the right of free men in our own country. What is happening now, what may happen hereafter, will be laid at the door of the British Government, and in our fight for freedom we disclaim responsibility for the doing of the said Government. We confidently appeal to our fellow citizens of Limerick to aid us in preserving the order of our City and to co-operate with us in every way in making the strike effective. Should any suffering or inconvenience be occasioned, we rely on the men and women of Limerick, inspired as they are by old and proud traditions, to suffer them patiently, as our forefathers did before us in the glorious cause in which we shall soon have millions of supporters from all over the world.'

The Limerick Chamber of Commerce was far from happy with the strike and some of its representatives had discussions with General Griffin in an effort to secure permits for their country customers to enable them to enter and leave the city. After the strike the Chamber made the sour complaint:

'Had the workers consulted with the Chamber before declaring a general strike, joint action could have been taken which might have been effective and saved the city from the disastrous strike which lasted twelve days. The Directors of this Chamber feel it their duty to enter an emphatic protest against the arbitrary action of the workers in calling a general strike without giving due notice to the employers. Had the position been reversed and the employers, without notice, closed down their premises, the workmen would have bitterly resented the action.'

Meanwhile the strike committee continued to review the progress of the strike, and, on Thursday, April 24, following discussions with the Catholic Bishop of Limerick, Dr. Hallinan and the Mayor of Limerick, Alphonsus O'Mara, the first crack in the workers' solidarity appeared. The strike committee, under strong pressure to end the strike, shifted ground. After a long meeting, John Cronin, chairman of the strike committee, addressed a big meeting of workers outside the Mechanic's Institute and announced the terms of the decision taken. He called on all workers who could resume work without military permits to do so, and those who could not to continue 'in their refusal to accept this sign of subjugation and slavery pending the decision of the Irish Trade Union Congress to be called immediately.' ('Limerick Chronicle' report). This decision meant that all workers living and working inside

# THE LIMERICK SOVIET

by jim kemmy

part 7

the military area could resume work and those outside could not.

The following proclamation was issued by the Strike Committee: 'Whereas the workers of Limerick have been on strike since Monday, April 14, as a protest against the Military ban on our city, and whereas in the meantime, the question has become a national issue, we hereby call on all workers who can resume work without military permits to do so tomorrow (Friday) morning. We further call upon all those workers whose daily occupation requires them to have military permits to continue in their refusal to accept this sign of subjugation and slavery pending the decision of a special Irish Trades Union Congress to be called immediately. We also call upon our fellow-countrymen and lovers of freedom all over the world to provide the necessary funds to enable us to continue this struggle against military tyranny.—(Signed): The Strike Committee.'

The 'Irish Times' reported: 'This decision was made at the close of an anxious day of conferences and 'conversations.' It was an open secret that definite steps would be taken this evening at the final session of the joint conference between the members of the Labour Executive and the Strike Committee, but the nature of the decision could not be anticipated.

'After an interchange of views with a delegation from the conference, the Most Rev. Dr. Hallinan, Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick and the Mayor called upon Brigadier-General Griffin, and discussed the situation at length. Subsequently his lordship and the Mayor sent a joint communication to the conference, and it was as a result of this document that the decision was reached. With the exception of about 600 employees at Messrs. Cleaves condensed milk factory, there will now be a general resumption of work. This announcement, while giving intense relief to the citizens generally, has been received with mixed feelings by the strikers. Many of them are glad to get back to work, but others regard the result as a defeat, and feel that their sacrifices have gone for nothing. They were basing their hopes upon a national strike, and, even when it became evident that this would not take place, they expressed their determination to continue the struggle. Their leaders, however, saw the futility of pursuing such a course and wisely decided to get out of an awkward situation as gracefully as possible.

'When the decision was conveyed to the men this evening they received it in silence, and the subsequent speeches of their leaders did not put them in better heart. Mr. John Cronin, Chairman of the Strike Committee, announced the terms of the decision, and added that the fight would go on and the flag would be kept flying.

'Mr. Thomas Johnson said that, taking everything into account, they had taken the best course for the moment. They believed that the fight had been taken up by the workers of Limerick on behalf of the people of Ireland as a whole. It was the duty of Ireland to continue it, and they were confident that their fellow-countrymen would back them up. A representative gathering of all trade unions throughout Ireland would be called, and it would decide how the fight should be continued. If Ireland was going to let the workers of Limerick down, then Ireland must be ashamed of herself, and need no longer call herself a fighter for freedom. He was convinced, however, that Ireland would not let them down. He had been impressed, as, perhaps, never before, except on the occasion of the one-day strike against conscription, by the conduct of the workers of Limerick during the last ten days. They had proved that workers could govern a city as efficiently as any other Government. Their conduct would be remembered to their credit and glory.

'The crowd which had assembled in front of the Mechanics' Institute—the 'Soviet's' headquarters—then quietly dispersed, and it was obvious that most of the men were going home gladdened by tomorrow's prospects.

'The workers who reside in Thomondgate are placed in a peculiar position by the decision, as they will require permits to come to their work in the city. There is no doubt, however, that, with the general resumption of work, they will not allow this difficulty to stand in their way.'

The intervention of the bishop was a decisive factor. The 'Irish Times' (April 26) stated: '... The opinion is undoubtedly entertained that the early attitude of the Roman Catholic clergy in supporting the strikers was not consistently pursued. It is freely stated that their views of the situation completely changed when they learned the drastic plans submitted by the Labour Executive to force the issue. They naturally discountenanced extreme measures and the Executive knowing that the people would be guided by their clergy, wisely abandoned their plans. ...'

And the bishop's attitude to the strike was further emphasised on Sunday, April 27, when Rev. W. Dwane, Administrator, addressing the congregation at 12 o'clock Mass in St. Michael's Church, said 'he had had a consultation with the Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. Hallinan, and in view of certain statements in the Press he felt called upon to refer to the strike which had taken place in Limerick. What he wished to state was that neither his Lordship nor the clergy were consulted before the strike was declared, and they were totally opposed to its continuance. His sympathies were always with the working classes. He was a great believer in the difficulty of the labourer, and any help he could give in raising the dignity of labour would be rendered by him on all occasions. But he hoped that the honest working men of Limerick would in future duly consider any action they were about to take, and be guided by leaders upon whom they could rely, and in whom they could have full confidence, and not allow themselves to be fooled or deceived by anybody whatsoever. He was very glad that the strike had ended, and it was very creditable that during its continuance everything was so peaceable and orderly in the city. ('Limerick Leader' report).

(to be continued)

TRADITIONALLY CINEMA has been one of the few social outlets for youth in a depressed stagnated cultural climate such as exists, and has existed, in Ireland. The standard of film appreciation reflects this, having been maintained at a very low level. Whilst there has been a definite improvement in the quality of films made in the past ten-twelve years, Ireland has benefitted less than most other countries as a consequence. This is because Irish cinema owners and distributors never made an attempt to introduce the Irish public to anything other than the most innocuous of the Anglo-American material over the years. In Dublin this is still largely the case even today, whilst in the provinces it is far worse.

This policy thrived in the days before television and the showbands, but now that the audience can be more selective, the law of diminishing returns has begun to catch up with the cinema owners, and many houses have already closed down, with many others on the economic survival line. (Of course the capitalist is in a position to withdraw a community service when it's no longer profitable to him—and to hell with the public).

In these circumstances a considerable responsibility devolves upon the film critics to draw the attention of the public to what is cheap and puerile in movies, and equally to raise the level of appreciation of films which might formerly have been classified as difficult or complex, and which accordingly would not have got through the censorship/distributor screening process in the less liberal days of yore.

To what extent does the local press fulfil the function outlined above? Let us look at the film page in the 'Limerick Leader' and draw what conclusions we can.

The reviews contained in the issue of 23rd September are a representative selection. The Savoy film, 'The Red Tent'

## wanted: film critic

is described as a film which has been hailed as 'the best adventure drama in years.' (Question: Who 'hailed' it?). 'Mary Queen of Scots', at the Grand Central, is described as 'beautifully designed, richly costumed, and superbly photographed.' (Here one is led to believe that this is the considered opinion of the reviewer). 'The Go-Between' at the Lyric is more modestly appraised, and is simply referred to as 'highly praised'. More hailing has been going on by the time we get down to 'The Andromeda Strain', this time the 'critic' sees it as a 'fascinating nerve-wracking science fiction thriller.' The revival of 'Dr. No' and 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly' is described as another week of 'star-studded double-feature revivals.'

The first comment to make is that whatever the reviews in the 'Leader' are, they are not reviews in the sense of critical appraisals of the films concerned. The regal dollops of praise heaped upon the films are derived from the syrupy pens of film company ad-men. But the give-away clue derives from the identity of the 'Leader's' film critic—that man behind the modest initials, Earl Connolly, the paper's Advertising Manager.

When one recalls that the attributions in inverted commas are never assigned to any newspaper source—for the simple reason that any critic worth his salt would never stoop to such a florid, exaggerated style—it is obvious that the 'reviews' are in fact straight cogs from advertising copy supplied by the film companies? That in fact, besides the paid advertisements

inserted by the cinema owners, the cinemas are getting free plugs in the most gratuitous fashion for films which are often dismally bad by one who poses as an objective film critic but whose very position ensures a continuous flow of revenue into the 'Leader's' coffers so long as the reviews continue to fulfil their strictly commercial, as opposed to educational, function? Food for thought....

\* D 08892

## BLINKERED DEFENDER

A RECENT SERIES in the 'Irish Press' (motto: 'For the Glory of the de Valera family and the honour of Fianna Fail') attempted to defend our sectarian constitution. The series was written by Francis McHenry, OSB, of Glenstal Abbey.

For those who don't know, Glenstal Abbey is set in elegant grounds in County Limerick. The college and its fees are exclusive. Students privileged to have parents wealthy enough to afford the annual fees of £300 for the 34-weeks course, also pay about £150 extra for books, uniform and their participation in various college clubs. The total annual fees, in fact, amount to almost half the average industrial wage.

By its selective screening Glenstal perpetuates the Rich-Catholic-Imperial old-boy network that ensures that over 70% of the wealth of this country will continue to be owned by 5% of the population.

Just as Fr. McHenry's articles continue to uphold a constitution of similar inequality.

## connolly's socialism

'THE IRISH middle class, who then by virtue of their social position and education stepped to the front as Irish patriot leaders, owed their unique status in political life to two entirely distinct and apparently antagonistic causes. Their wealth they derived from the manner in which they had contrived to wedge themselves into a place in the commercial life of the 'Saxon enemy', assimilating his ideas and adopting his methods, until they often proved the most ruthless of the two races in pushing to its furthest limits their powers of exploitation. Their political influence they derived from their readiness at all times to do lip service to the cause of Irish nationality, which in their phraseology meant simply the transfer of the seat of government from London to Dublin, and the consequent transfer to their own or their relatives' pockets of some portion of the legislative fees and lawyers' pickings then, as at present, expended among the Cockneys. With such men at the helm it is no wonder that the patriot parties of Ireland have always ended their journey upon the rock of disaster.' ('Erin's Hope—The End and the Means').

'WHEN THE WORKER has so far advanced as to realise that his master's interests are antagonistic to his own, that the master class use every weapon from Parliament to prison to maintain their position against what they consider the encroachment of their serfs, then we have no doubt that the next step in the intellectual development of the worker will be to consider whether it is wise to tolerate longer a class in society which requires to be watched so constantly and guarded against so vigilantly; whether there is indeed any useful function performed by the capitalist and landlord class which the organised workers cannot perform without them.' ('Workers' Republic', August 27, 1898.)

'ONCE AND FOR ALL it must be understood that he who strikes at labour in Ireland will get blow for blow in return. It may be necessary to wait patiently for years, but when the opportunity comes the blow should be swift and decisive and merciless' ('Workers' Republic, June 1915).

## LIMERICK SOCIALIST

Dear Reader,

Thank you for buying our paper and supporting the socialist cause. The purpose of the paper is to provide a socialist commentary and analysis at monthly intervals, on all important developments in Limerick and Irish politics.

This paper is written, produced and sold almost entirely by members and supporters of the Limerick Socialist Organisation. We feel that the paper deserves the support of every politically conscious Limerick worker. We want people to contribute articles and letters. We would also welcome suggestions and criticisms, and we could do with more physical and financial support in ensuring that this paper reaches the widest possible readership. We would particularly welcome more volunteers to sell the paper in their jobs, in trade unions and on the streets of Limerick. For further details, please contact the 'Limerick Socialist':

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# TOBACCO TRAIL

DESPITE THE INEXPLICABLE failure to round off the evening with a chorus or two of that old smoking-concert favourite, 'The tip of my old cigar', there was no shortage of tips. There were tips on how to cloak the opposing interests of capital and labour; tips on how to win markets and influence your profits; tips on the different blends and sizes of the new panatella and cigarillo; and, of course, cigar tips kept popping up all over the place in harmony with the champagne corks.

The occasion was a special cocktail reception to mark the centenary of Clune's, the Limerick tobacco factory. Mayor Paddy Kiely, manfully measuring up to his role of penny-boy to local capitalism, was on hand to wish 'them every success in the launching of the new brand of Dutch cigar.' Steve Coughlan, the Labour Party deputy, who a few months ago was 'opposing' the EEC also attended and, in a glowing tribute, wished Clune's 'every success in the EEC.'

But the star turn of the programme was Mr. Eric A. M. van Thiel, managing director of the Dutch tobacco company, Karel I. He was well primed and gave a polished performance, only stopping short of quoting the well-known lines, 'I'd follow a man to Hindustan who smoked a good cigar. Mr. Thiel did not follow anyone to Hindustan, but he did follow his profits to Hanratty's hotel.

The press boys, liberally plied with free drink and cigars, went to town on the publicity. The 'Limerick Leader' made a 'big deal' of the event and gave it wide coverage in two editions. The 'Leader' (September 2) described the 'great honour bestowed on the firm of John Clune Ltd. ... by the new link-up between the big Dutch company and the small Limerick firm. The combination of well-mixed cocktails and well-made cigars appears to have had a strong, if somewhat delayed effect on the 'Limerick Chronicle' man. His report of the reception did not appear until September 23, but his account was worth waiting for. He wrote: 'Recently this century-old Limerick tobacco company were selected to act as sole agents for the internationally-known Karel I company—a great tribute indeed to Messrs. Clune and a testimonial to the commercial status of Limerick.'

Mr. Dermot P. Hurley, managing director of Clune's, was not outdone, and gave the recipe of his factory's success. 'Our policy has always been to concern ourselves with quality rather than profit and shall continue to be,' he declared. The survival and economic success of his firm over the last 100 years and the present link-up with Karel put a dent in 'just for the love of it' thesis. The Flying Dutchman, however, was having none of this 'grá mo croí' attitude, and stated his position plainly in giving the real reason for his

visit to Limerick: 'Approximately 60 per cent of the Karel I sales is exported and exports are continuously and rapidly expanding ... Ireland is still to be explored.'

So the link-up is nothing more than a shrewd economic deal by the Limerick family firm in integrating with the large Dutch organisation. What the 'Leader' described as 'a great honour bestowed on the firm of John Clune Ltd' is a calculated business arrangement in which the local factory has faced the economic reality that Dutch exports are going to dominate the cigar section of the Irish tobacco market in the years ahead. Clune's 'if you can't beat them, join them' philosophy has nothing whatsoever to do with honour; it is a timely move by the Limerick firm to grab a rake-off of the exploitation of the Irish market by providing a distribution and selling service for Karel.

And who will doubt that where there is tobacco there is also money? In a financial statement issued on September 8 by the British Imperial Tobacco Group Limited in making an offer to take over Courage Ltd., the brewery company, the following profits were shown for 1971:

Profit before taxation \$68.2 million.  
Profit after taxation and minority interests \$44 million.

A nice reward for quality and honour!

## COUNCIL COMMENTARY

LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL'S request that political shadow-boxing be included in the next Games at Montreal is being given serious consideration by the International Olympic Committee it was learned today.

The German News Agency reports that a select group, drawn from the three political parties on the Council, arrived in Munich shortly after the closing ceremony and immediately went in a deputation to the new president, Lord Killanin.

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'Sure, he is one of our own,' Ald. Steve Coughlan is reported to have said.

The first reaction from the surprised Olympic officials was one of amazement as they had completely overlooked this sport which has a huge following in many countries.

After meeting the IOC President, Ald. Coughlan and Ald. Pat Kennedy gave a polished exhibition of the art of shadow-boxing as they battled for the most advantageous camera position during a press conference.

Immediately other impromptu demonstrations of the science of political self-preservation broke out among the councillors and an excited German TV reporter excitedly shouted into his microphone ... 'The 1976 Games have already begun and here we have some of the best gombeen politicians in the World.'

Lord Killanin brought the action to a halt by announcing that drinks were to be served to the thirsty contestants. He declared: 'It is most appropriate that I should be patron of the new sport. I did a lot of shadow-boxing to get my new job and after all, one of my mates, the Marquis of Salisbury, did a lot for that other sport.'

While all this was going on, another deputation member, the Mayor Cllr. Paddy Kiely, tugged at the sleeve of Lord Killanin. 'Tell us, your lordship,' said the Mayor, '... in this Montreal now ... will there be any hawkers allowed? ...'

Gardaí today continued their search for the missing plane bearing five Fianna Fail

members which disappeared on a return flight from Munich. Shannon Airport control lost radio contact shortly before it was due to land. A radio operator said he had heard screams and a voice saying: 'This is a hi-jack...fly to Lisdoonvarna,' although this could not be confirmed by airport authorities.

It has been known for some time that there has been dissension in the Fianna Fail camp on the City Council and the pow-wow in Munich was intended to put an end to the power struggle.

It is understood that Cllr. Jack Bourke wanted to be made leader. 'I'm the most cultured,' he said. On the other hand, Cllr. Rory Liddy was determined to hang on to his position and declared: 'No culture-monger will push me around.'

The Mayor, Cllr. Paddy Kiely handled the insurance policies, and the wives were only brought along to prevent an orgy.

The disappearance of the plane on the return journey has caused a major political shock throughout the world. Immediately a two-man Garda row-boat set out on a rescue attempt. Concerned Corporation officials lined the quays as the two brave would-be rescuers set out, and the City Manager was heard to say: 'Take it easy boys ... don't exert ye're selves ... they're not worth it.'

### LATE FLASH

A light aircraft landed in the Barrack Field this evening and the missing councillors poured out singing: 'The Party's Over ...'

Asked for a comment, the Mayor told bewildered onlookers: 'God is good, and Jack is learning.'